

Guidance for a New City

A clear, cohesive vision of Damascus' future will allow community members to see what this city strives to be. This vision, part of the Damascus City Plan, has been developed by the citizens of Damascus. The citizens have actively participated and spoken with a strong voice about what they value in their community and what they want for its future.

Damascus is now part of the Metro regional urban growth boundary. This means the city will see significant change in the coming decades. If this growth is well planned these changes will benefit the city's residents and businesses. However, if growth is unguided and occurs without a coordinated plan it will harm the very qualities Damascus residents hold dear. A vision helps guide the decision-making process that will define the city's future. This vision will be used to guide the development of the Damascus City Plan and how the city manages growth and change over time.

The Damascus City Plan will have four parts:

1. A **Vision** expressing the ideas and values residents have for the future of Damascus;
2. A **Comprehensive Plan** providing the overall city goals and policies that guide decisions over time to realize the Vision;
3. An **Implementation Plan** providing the strategies for reaching the goals outlined in the Vision and the comprehensive plan. Implementation plans include the zoning code, infrastructure plans and project plans such as how to build a new downtown;
4. A **Benchmarking** system provides the city and the community a framework for tracking progress toward the vision.



The Damascus Vision builds on prior planning studies, such as the 2001 Damascus Concept Planning Study; the 1000 friends Damascus Design Workshop; and the Damascus/Boring Concept Plan. Each of these studies illustrated ideas about how Damascus might development. The 'Guidance for a New City' document is the only official vision that directs City Council's decisions about how future growth in the city will look.

Hundreds of Damascus residents contributed their ideas and images to the city's Vision. During 2006 the city held an extensive citizen involvement effort. Citizens attended "coffee klatches" with City Council members. Others attended "summer socials" that allowed for further input. All in all, over 750 people attended one or more of these meetings. In addition, even more input was gained from surveys and a public opinion poll.



Three components form the 'Guidance for a New City' document: resident priorities, community core values and the planning building blocks for new development.

Resident Priorities

The resident priorities are based on what is on people's minds right now. They are a filter through which the community will examine the city's actions. The resident priorities advise the Council about how the city should be moving forward. These resident priorities are a response to current situations. They will change over time as new circumstances arise.

Core Values

The core values describe the deeply held values of the Damascus community. The core values contained in the Vision represent an evolution of those developed for the Damascus/Boring Concept Plan. They have been refined through input from the coffee klatches, summer socials and a city-wide values survey. The city planning documents, such as the comprehensive plan, transportation system plan and the public facilities plan, will focus on implementing the core values. Unlike the resident priorities, deeply held values do not change dramatically. And when they do change, it takes place slowly.

Building Blocks

The building blocks represent current city models for development which are consistent with the resident priorities and core values. The building blocks reflect many of the community's preferred images of development.

Resident Priorities

As part of the coffee klatches and summer social outreach activities and the web and Observer surveys, the community identified a number of issues about guiding growth in Damascus:

Protect and preserve existing neighborhoods

With growth expected in Damascus, an important message citizens wanted the Council to hear is that existing, stable neighborhoods should be preserved and protected from large scale change. While much of Damascus is undeveloped, many of the city's residents live in established neighborhoods with residential lots of one to two acres in size. These neighborhoods and the lifestyle they represent are part of what is important to Damascus residents. While change is inevitable, the city will strive to protect the qualities of these existing neighborhoods.

Connect communities with streams, buttes, and nature

Natural areas and open space are highly valued in Damascus. From the Clackamas River to the city's five distinctive buttes and open areas in between, city residents said they want additional parks and trail connections in order to protect Damascus' high quality of life. In addition, many residents desire farming to continue in Damascus as long as feasible.

Respect Private Property Rights

Damascus residents have said they do not want excessively restrictive zoning to devalue their property. The city will seek ways to work cooperatively with property owners to achieve both community and resident goals.

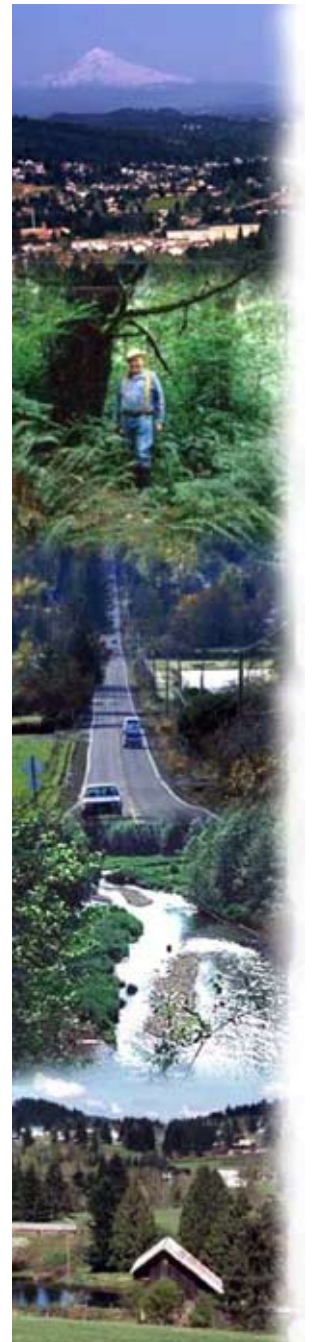
Embrace all types of land use at a location and scale appropriate to Damascus.

The community expressed interest in having a wide range of land uses and different scales of development in Damascus. Some land uses and developments will reflect an emphasis using vehicles to get around; others will focus on getting around by walking and bicycling. Variety and recognizing differences in appropriateness and scale from place to place will be important in devising a plan for Damascus. In general, Damascus residents also said they want future uses to reflect and enhance the rural and small town character of Damascus.

Develop at a Pace that Fits Damascus' Capabilities

Damascus is currently a rural community without sewer service, a comprehensive water system, and urban roads. Developing the capability to bring these urban services to all areas will be challenging. Residents said they want growth in the city to proceed at a pace that fits Damascus, ensuring new development occurs only if adequate urban services are in place and that providing infrastructure is done in a financially responsible manner.

As the city moves from Vision to implementation, these resident priorities will be addressed and integrated into the planning for Damascus.



State and Regional Rules

The city is part of the larger metropolitan area. We share an air shed, water resources and a road network with others in the region. Damascus is also part of what defines Oregon, the beauty of this place and the values that we share with other Oregonians. When planning for growth in Damascus, the city is a partner in protecting what we value in this region and in Oregon. The city will be working within federal, state and regional rules that are intended to protect and create the best for the future. During the coffee klatches and the summer socials the community reaffirmed many of the core values which are consistent with the planning regulations that the city must address. Some regulations are prescriptive and others are goals. The city will work diligently to craft a plan which reflects the community's desires as well as meet State and regional requirements.

Some rules which the city must address during the next phase of the planning process include:

- **Oregon statewide planning goals and rules;**
- **Property compensation law passed as Measure 37 in 2004;**
- **Metro's conditions in Ordinance 02-969B that brought the Damascus Boring area into the urban growth boundary,**
- **Metro's Urban Growth Management Functional Plan;**

Core Values

The Boring/Damascus Concept Plan started with the development of core values. During the development of the city's Vision, the core values were reviewed by Damascus residents. A diverse mix of people, representing all walks of life in the city, participated in surveys and opinion polls. The respondents overwhelmingly agreed on several key statements they believed should be part of the foundation for building the Damascus Vision. The core values listed below represent a refinement and reaffirmation of the community core values and are a statement of how they want to see the city grow.

1. Well-Designed Communities and Core Areas

The urban and rural components of the city of Damascus shall be developed and integrated in a sustainable and environmentally-responsible manner. Careful consideration must be given to the planning and design of all civic and physical infrastructures. A variety of attractive design styles shall reflect the area's history.

To avoid sprawl, core areas shall have mixed-use developments that combine medium- to high-density residential units with compatible commercial and retail components, all of which surround a community plaza. The core area shall have adequate, attractive, reasonably-sized parking areas, as well as main streets that are pedestrian friendly. Denser, more developed areas shall be clustered to minimize encroachment on open rural landscape. The result shall be safe and welcoming core areas offering opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to interact.



2. Effective Transportation Systems

A coordinated land use and transportation plan shall be crafted to ensure an efficient, attractive, and financially feasible system of motorized and non-motorized transportation. This will include a transit system. Within the core areas there shall be public transportation to move people efficiently while reducing vehicular traffic. Major through-traffic shall be routed around the core areas.

3. Employment and Economy

The City of Damascus shall create a diverse range of employment opportunities building on existing employment in the area. Identification of adequate employment-producing land shall occur early in the planning process, well before development occurs. Future employment growth shall capitalize on strengths within the region and tie into international markets.

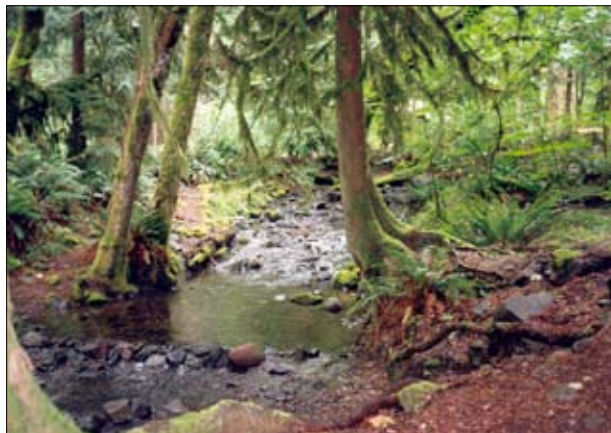
4. Governance

The city and related service providers, with a sense of integrity, ownership, and accountability, shall see that appropriate infrastructure is provided prior to the occurrence of significant growth.

Core Values Continued

5. Rural Character

As growth occurs in the city of Damascus the area shall retain a substantial degree of rural character, even while accommodating a fair share of regional residential and employment growth. Rural character means that open landscape is integrated with and more visually dominant than urban development. Development shall be clustered in such a way that a maximum amount of open space is retained. As growth proceeds, a density gradient shall be established and maintained; density shall be most intense in core areas and gradually less dense toward open spaces that include riparian areas, nurseries, parks, produce farms, small-scale farms, greenways, golf courses, upland forests, and non-developable land such as landslide-prone slopes.



6. Sense of Community

Development in the city of Damascus shall accommodate opportunities for neighbors to gather and participate in caring for the community. Public spaces will encourage both organized and casual interaction and provide a variety of indoor and outdoor activities for a diverse citizenry of all ages. Such community spaces and activities include residential neighborhoods, schools, playgrounds, Day in the Park events, farmers' markets, community and senior centers, and community parks and plazas. Provisions shall be made to allow for the number of community spaces to increase as the community grows. Each neighborhood community within Damascus shall maintain and reflect its inherent history and distinct identity. The inspiration for forming the City of Damascus came from the community; the city shall continue to encourage unique, even risk-taking innovation from the community.

7. Environmental Responsibility and Protected Special Places

The City of Damascus shall distinguish itself nationally by its concern for natural areas. Linking corridors that interconnect green spaces shall embody this value. The growth occurring in the area shall be designed to ensure the quality of nature's gifts, including—but not limited to—clean water, high-quality fish and wildlife habitat, healthy air quality, and the area's heritage and history.

The city's plan shall maintain opportunities for farming, local markets, and pastoral views. A network of trails linking green spaces and historical sites and routes within the area shall utilize natural waterways to interconnect parks on the area's many buttes.

Damascus should strive for sustainability, encouraging conservation and energy efficiency in both urban design and city function.

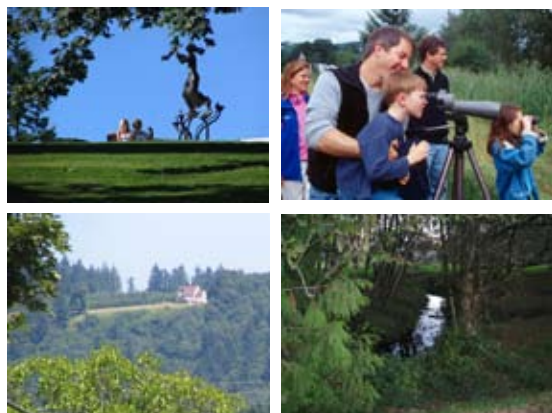
Building Blocks of Damascus' Future

The “building blocks” of the Damascus Vision will be used to develop the comprehensive plan and zoning code. Over time, these building blocks will become more detailed, resulting in the comprehensive plan and eventually a zoning map for the city. The building blocks mirror current

development models in the region, and also include some new approaches to arranging the layout of neighborhoods, shopping and service centers and areas for jobs. Building blocks fall into two main categories: walkable mixed use building blocks and conventional use building blocks.



The diagram below provides a picture of how Damascus may look in the future. Each of the colors on the illustration describes a mix of different types of development. Here's a quick tour of the building blocks for developing our city.



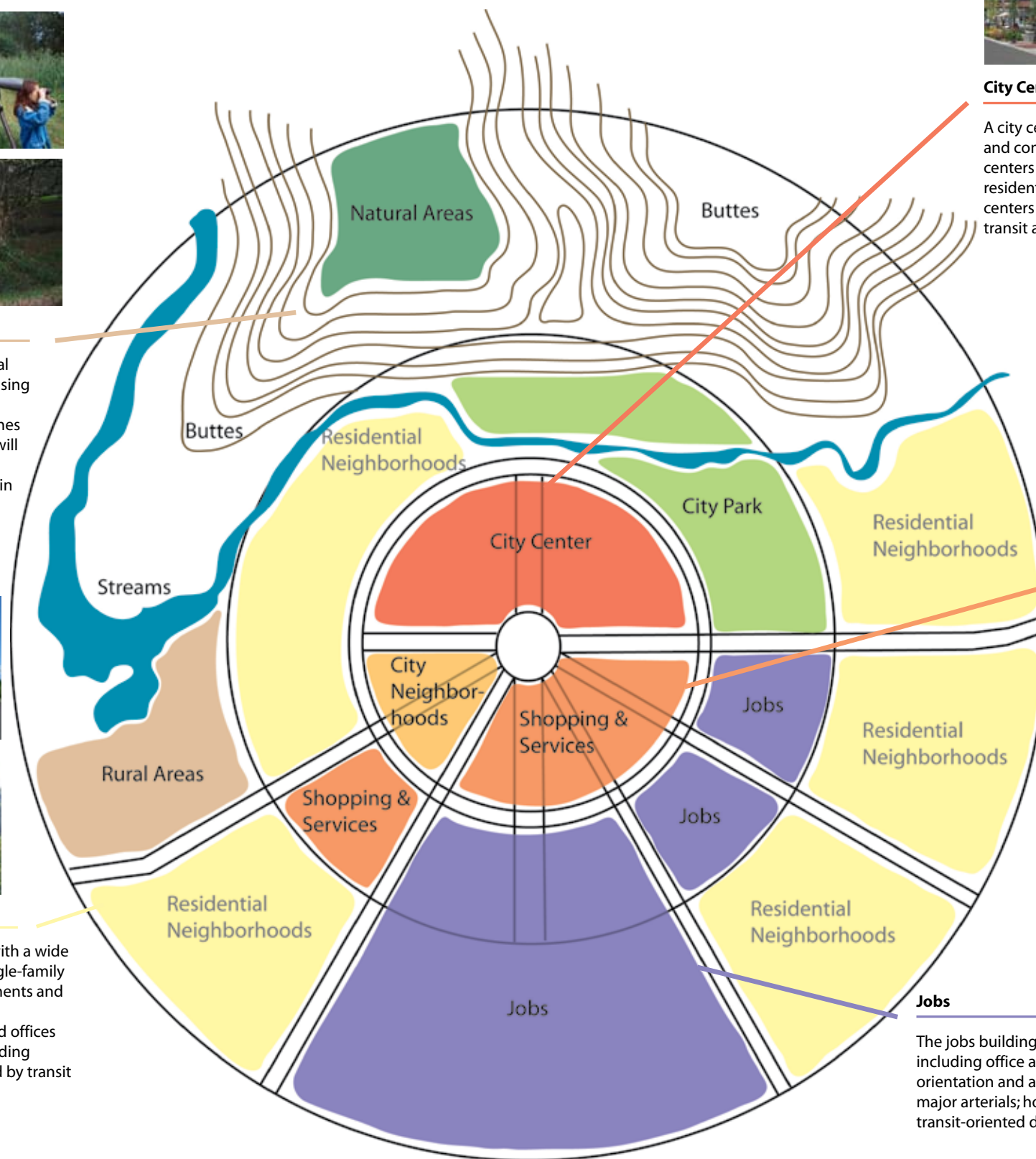
Rural Areas, Buttes & Streams

The natural buttes, streams and parks form a vital system of green space throughout the city. Housing in these areas will be low density, and more expensive, attracting people with a mix of incomes to the area. People in buttes and streams areas will primarily be dependent on automobiles for transportation; most residences will not be within walking distance of transit.



Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are predominately residential with a wide variety of housing sizes and types, including single-family homes, townhomes, and low- to mid-rise apartments and condominiums. Neighborhoods also provide concentrations of pedestrian-oriented shops and offices along key corridors or at key intersections, providing important services and job opportunities served by transit and within walking distance of area homes.



City Center

A city center is the civic hub, providing high intensity, concentrated job and commercial activity supported by denser housing types. City centers are pedestrian-oriented with a mix of offices, retail, civic and residential development served by multiple transportation options. City centers are not only inviting on foot but also easily accessible by car, transit and bicycle.



Shopping & Services

Shopping and services areas are hubs of community retail activity that also provide residents with opportunities to live, work, and play within a short distance. Good access to transit is a critical element of these areas; pedestrian, bicycle and automobile access users are well accommodated.



Jobs

The jobs building block represents major employment areas throughout the city, including office and industrial uses. Job centers are distinguished by automobile orientation and are usually positioned at major intersections or along highways or major arterials; however, transit service may also help to create some pockets of transit-oriented development, including some low- to mid-rise residential buildings.

Walkable Mixed-Use Building Blocks

These are areas where a balance of housing, jobs and shopping will exist in close proximity, allowing residents to live, work, shop and play in the same neighborhood. Public transit, bicycles and walking will get priority in these areas, although cars will still play an important role. These areas have slower moving traffic and a shorter than average car trip.

Conventional, Separate-Use Building Blocks

These areas follow a development pattern of distinct areas for housing, jobs and shopping. These areas are typical of much of Damascus today. Much new development will follow this pattern as well, especially lower density residential neighborhoods and areas that focus on jobs. Opportunities for walking and bicycling tend to be more limited, but should nevertheless be accommodated with good connections to centers and parks throughout the city.

The following section provides brief descriptions of specific types of building blocks.



WALKABLE MIXED-USE BUILDING BLOCKS

City Center

The city center is the civic hub of Damascus. It is the home for higher intensity, concentrated jobs and commercial activity supported by denser housing types. The city center is pedestrian-oriented with a mix of offices, retail, civic and residential development served by multiple transportation options. The city center is not only inviting on foot but also easily accessible by car, bicycle, and over time, excellent transit service.

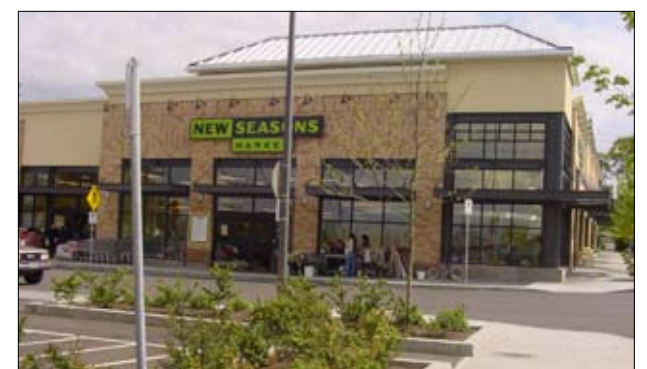


In the city center, ground floors of buildings will feature shops with many windows for visual interest and safety while the streetscape incorporates trees for shade, wide sidewalks and easy-to-use signs for finding points of interest. Civic and open spaces provide an inviting atmosphere for people on foot as well as a diversity of uses, generating activity throughout the day and evening. The city center building block is an important transit hub for regional bus service and may eventually include local transit systems.



Shopping & Services

Shopping and services areas are hubs of community retail activity that also provide residents with opportunities to live within a short distance. They are also places where people work, meet with friends and recreate. Good access is a critical element of these areas; pedestrian, bicycle and automobile and transit users are well accommodated. This building block incorporates a mix of residential and employment uses at a lower density than the city center building block. These areas will have the character of a small town such as Troutdale's center and are typically supported by surrounding residential areas rather than being regional destinations. Buildings range from two- and three-story residential or commercial buildings to townhomes and small corner shops. Similar to the city center, this urban mixed-use building block offers employment and housing options and represents important economic growth areas for businesses. People on foot or bike can enjoy inviting storefronts at ground level with benches, public art, on-street parking and wide sidewalks, creating an appealing streetscape. Large parking areas and other auto-oriented land uses are typically located at the edges of the area, or along the busiest streets.



City Neighborhoods

City neighborhoods do not exist today in Damascus but will develop around shopping and service areas where appropriate. They are predominately residential but are distinguished from existing Damascus neighborhoods by the wide variety of housing options they provide and easy access to all elements of the transportation network. Housing choices should include single-family detached dwellings in a variety of lot sizes, townhomes, and low density condominiums. Apartments will be small scale, and large concentrations should be avoided. These neighborhoods may have small areas of shops and offices along key corridors or at key intersections, providing important services within walking distance of residents. City neighborhood streets will be very pedestrian friendly, providing excellent connectivity to shopping, schools and other community services. Emphasis should be placed on slowing traffic through streets that are appropriately scaled and designed to be friendly to people in cars or on foot. Public investments in these areas will focus on parks, pathways, pedestrian-oriented landscaping and road improvements.



CONVENTIONAL SEPARATE-USE BUILDING BLOCKS

Residential Neighborhoods

Residential neighborhoods are predominately single-family and represent the lowest density building block. Damascus has many neighborhoods that match this description. Some shops, restaurants or institutional land uses such as schools and religious institutions that serve neighborhood residents may be located at the edges or at key intersections. Neighborhood parks provide open space for families. Individual lot size, front yard and side yard setbacks, garage orientation and scale of the home will vary from neighborhood to neighborhood. Size and style of house will also vary and respond to the landscape. Flat valley lands will lend themselves better to conventional new neighborhoods while places like the buttes or natural areas will offer extra space or opportunity for larger view-type houses. These areas rely primarily on cars for access, although traffic on neighborhood streets is expected to be low. Cut-through traffic or spillover traffic from commercial areas will be discouraged. While public transit eventually may be available, typically it will involve longer walks to bus stops or the need to drive to park-and-ride facilities. Newly developed neighborhoods may provide pedestrian access to community services through short block lengths, narrow streets, sidewalks, and paths with hike and bike trails and might also provide improved access to transit service. Public investment will focus on enhancing quality of life by providing amenities such as parks, trails, and road improvements.



Jobs Lands

This building block represents major employment or shopping destinations outside of the city center and shopping and service areas. This building block is usually at major intersections, or at key intersections of major arterials. Streets in these areas emphasize efficient movement of vehicles, including trucks, but have adequate pedestrian and bike facilities. Bold lighting and linear landscaping features such as esplanades and tree-lined boulevards can work to distinguish and identify these areas. Public spaces may be at key entry points and central locations. Gateway landscaping, monuments and other devices will provide visibility from the major roads and guide visitors to destinations. Public transit may play a role in these areas and help create some pockets of transit-oriented development. Business centers and corridors will provide important concentrations of employment within Damascus. Some areas that are dedicated to industrial uses will have functional buildings and be designed for low operating costs. Others will be more office oriented and include clusters of businesses that are not compatible with the City Center or Shopping and Service areas. However, this building block should not be developed into linear strips along highways, but rather into efficient nodes at key crossroads.



Natural Areas

Ponds, rivers, streams and parks form a vital system of green space throughout Damascus. Beloved places such as the Clackamas River and the five buttes will be joined by new parks, open spaces and healthy natural streams.

